

# Who is Cyrus Dallin?

Cyrus Edwin Dallin (1861-1944) Springville, Utah  
**Captured but not Conquered**, 1918  
Sculpture-bronze cast, 32-3/4" x 10"

## SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

### QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING (History, Aesthetics, Criticism)

Without knowing the title or date of this sculpture, what feelings or stories does it bring to mind? What emotional quality does the sculpture's gesture (dramatic stance) have for you? What qualities does the facial expression and body language (gesture) suggest? What emotion does the clinched fist bring to mind? How about the hand casually in the pocket? Is there a conflict here?

This sculpture was made when this uniform was current. When do you think Cyrus Dallin sculpted *Captured but not Conquered*? (1918) Why? What was going on in 1918 to inspire this sculpture? What country does this sculpture represent? How can you tell?

This is a sculpture of an American prisoner of war, from WWI. Who do you think his captors were? Dallin modeled this sculpture in 1918 for the Liberty Loan Campaign. This model of a defiant soldier represented one of the first American soldiers to be captured by the Germans in World War I. Dallin used a newspaper photograph for his model. At first unidentified, the soldier was later found to be Edgar M. Halyburton. What do you think the sculptor was trying to say with *Captured but not Conquered*? Do you think he succeeded?

Cyrus Dallin also did a number of World War I sculptures, including one of his son Albert who was an ambulance driver during the war. Do you think his son's participation in WWI may have made this sculpture of a soldier more important to the artist? Why?

Do you know anyone who was in World War I? Is art about a war nearly 80 years ago important to you? Do you have any strong feelings about WWI? How about WWII, the Korean War, Vietnam, or the Gulf War? If you knew someone who fought or perhaps was captured or died in a war, would sculptures and paintings about that war be more important to you? Why? Is art more interesting if you have personal experience with the subject matter? Are there ways to appreciate art even if you don't know what its about? What are some?

Look at the lines and shapes and textures in this sculpture and see if anything there is interesting to you.

Did you find an interesting detail? Was it something you recognized? Is the haircut interesting? Or maybe the boots or the way the cloth is wrinkled? Remember there isn't any hair or boots or cloth, the piece is only bronze; but lines, shapes, values of light and dark and textures of rough and smooth can make you see something else. Can art be interesting even if it only looks like itself and not like something else? What are some kinds of art that don't try to represent anything except the medium being used?

## ACTIVITIES

### 1. Visual Arts-making

**Objective:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of found object sculpture, constructions, and assemblages by designing and building (either as a group or individually) a human figure sculpture made of assembled found objects.

Materials:

Any appropriate found objects and appropriate material for attaching them together. The size of the objects needs to be considered relative to the desired size of the finished sculpture.

Found Objects might be sticks, scraps of wood, plastic objects, toys, parts of small mechanical devices, rocks, clothing, etc. Be inventive and avoid the obvious.

Students will first study the sculpture, *Captured but not Conquered*, by Cyrus Dallin, paying attention to gesture (dramatic stance) and proportion (size relationships). After a brief discussion of these important issues, students will each design a figure sculpture by making a brief gestural drawing of their sculpture. There is no need for detail, but attention must be paid to proportion and dramatic movement. (Gesture drawings are quick sketches that use just a few lines to capture the feeling of movement or stance.) Notice how simple the gesture is in *Captured but not Conquered*, but also how poignant and powerful. (Other Cyrus Dallin sculptures in this packet can be shown as examples.)

After each student has developed an idea, the concept of found object assemblage should be discussed. Ask students if they could make a portrait of a person by using butterfly wing, leaves, or coins. Pursue the idea by asking what materials could be used to make Dallin's sculpture. What could be used for his head? For his arms, torso, legs, and feet? At this point, some of the Dada sculpture from the early 20th century, like Man Ray's or Marcel Duchamp's or Pablo Picasso's *Bulls Head*, which is made from bicycle parts, should be shown. Also look up a Renaissance painter, Arcomboldo, who painted portraits by painting assemblages of fruits, vegetables, roots, flowers, leaves, etc.

Have students divide into groups and cooperate to choose a gestural idea. It may be a compromise of several ideas.

Students should then collect objects that resemble body parts or that can be put together to approximate body parts, keeping the gesture in mind. Remind the students these objects must be attached and able to bear their own weight. Glue, wire, strings, screws, nails, nuts, and bolts can all be used to attach the objects together. If small objects are going to be used, some kind of armature should be constructed on which to attach the objects. The finished sculpture need not be large, but sometimes ideas need to be expressed big enough for the dynamics to work.

After the pieces are finished, an exhibition venue should be created either for the public or within the school or even the classroom. Have students evaluate each other's work and their own work by extemporaneously creating short story scenarios about the work and the relationship of the found object parts to the whole sculpture. For example: the clock-faced sculpture is late for a very important date; the man made out of match sticks probably shouldn't be a fireman. Creative titling of the work can accomplish the same affect, that of imbuing meaning and content in the sculpture.

## **2. Visual Arts-contextualizing**

**Objective:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of how the warrior, as subject matter, has been depicted in art across cultures and throughout history by comparing and contrasting at least two divergent works of art which use the warrior motif as a visual narrative.

After looking at and discussing Cyrus Dallin's sculpture, *Captured But Not Conquered*, in terms of how this work of art depicts a very personal aspect of war and reflects the philosophical mood of a time and a culture, assign students to research how warriors have been shown in the arts throughout history and from a variety of cultural points of view.

Military armed conflict has been a significant element of the human condition as long as there has been a human condition. The depiction of war as subject matter for the arts has equal longevity. For example, there are wall paintings of dancing warriors with raised weapons from the Gasulla Gorge in Spain, which are dated at about 10,000 years ago. Steer student research into several directions to get a broad-based appraisal of this motif's frequency of use.

**Directions for research:**

In ancient art, war is one of the most common subjects found. Have students look for the following examples:

Egyptian: *Palette of Narmer*, c. 3000 B.C.

Sumerian: *Scenes of War*, from the *Standard of Ur*, c. 2700 B.C.

Assyrian: *Ashurnasirpal II at War*, c. 875 B.C.

Greek: *Fallen Warrior*, c. 490 B.C.

Chinese: *Terra Cotta Tomb Warriors*, c. 300-200 B.C.

Roman: *Dying Gaul*, c. 240 B.C.

This motif is also available from many lesser known cultures and geographies such as, Oceanic Island Peoples; Polynesian, Melanesian, Micronesian, Papuan, Indonesian; Meso American; Aztec, Mayan, Native American; South American; Incan; Asian; Chinese, Indian, Japanese, 15th century Ukiyo-e prints, African; Benin bronze warriors, 15th century European.

Remember that even in the High Renaissance sculptures of David were made by Verraccio, Michelangelo, Bernini, and Donatello; David was an Israeli warrior. In more modern European art, there are also many examples to be found and compared.

From Spain, Francisco Goya, *The Third of May* 1808, 1814, and *Disasters of War* (a series of aquatint prints) 1810.

From France, Eugene Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People* 1830, and François Rude, *La Marseillaise* stone relief sculpture from the Arc de Triomphe Paris, 1833-36.

From 20th- century Europe, Kathe Köllwitz, *The Prisoners* 1908, etching, is a good example.

From America, there is *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, by Emanuel Leutze, Paul Revere's engraving, *The Bloody Massacre*, 1770 and Matthew Brady's Civil War photography, in addition to the other Cyrus Dallin pieces such as *Paul Revere*.

This is an extremely abbreviated list, but gives some areas to pursue in search of the warrior as a motif in art.

When students have finished researching and have found their examples, have them present either in written form or orally, a compare and contrast report of the visuals. Some questions to address in the compare and contrast style might be: Is war being presented here as something heroic and noble? As distinguished and base? Whose interests are being served by art that shows warrior glory as a desirable thing? Is the warrior a specific person or is the image a representation of a generic character? What was the cultural attitude toward war when these works were created? What specific wars were these models representing, if any? Can you, in 1996, look at art of an earlier time and not lay your own attitude and esoteric view over it? Can you see it as it was meant to be seen?

To get beyond the simple subject matter of the artworks, have students also include a description of the work, not just in terms of subject matter but also of the visual elements (line, shape, value, color, and texture) and the principles and techniques used by the artist. Photocopied facsimiles of the chosen works can be an important part of this project.

For younger students, compare and contrast verbal processing is developmentally significant and achievable. Have the examples (prints or large photos from books) available. Fix a time and geographic culture to the work and ask questions such as the following: What is the same in each? What is different in each? Do the warriors look happy or sad? Why? Which art work is older? Which one do you like best? Why?

An adjunct or extension project is to find literature that either correlates to or contrasts with the art works and is from either the same time and culture or from different eras and places.

Try the compare and contrast approach using Cyrus Dallin's two warrior images contained in this packet, Paul Revere, and Captured but not Conquered .

Ask: How are they different? What kind of feeling do you have when you look at each?

### **3. Language Arts-writing**

**Objective:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of letter writing techniques and personal involvement in their writing by writing a letter home as if they were the soldier depicted in Cyrus Dallin's *Captured but not Conquered*.

After viewing the image, discuss with your students the time and place of the European battlefield of 1918 and what American involvement was like. Describe to students some of the specifics of Dallin's sculpture, who it is, why Dallin made it, and for whom (see QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING).

First stimulate students' thinking by asking what was a prisoner of war camp in 1918 Germany like. Was Germany winning the war, and how would that affect the treatment of prisoners? What was the German economy like in 1918? How old do you think this soldier was? Use an approach similar to what follows to present the assignment.

Now, if you could only write one page home to your family, your best friend, your girlfriend, the president or anyone you choose, what would you want to say? Would you write about the conditions? Would you write about your feelings and fears? Would you try to be encouraging and positive so folks wouldn't worry? Would you see it as political? Make your letter personal. It is about you, not Edgar Halyburton (the man in the sculpture).

After this assignment is complete, let some of the students read their letters and then open it up to the class for discussion. For examples of personal letters, see *Letters to Theo*, by

Vincent Van Gogh and a letter from Gauguin. There is also a great PBS special with footage from Vie Nay and letters from the boys.

The goal here is to learn proper personal letter writing styles, that literature is personal, and that we share many similarities with other people even if our circumstances are different.

#### **4. Social Studies**

**Objective:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of the scope and significance of war memorials and how they reflect the attitude of the time by writing a brief description of at least four American War Memorial Monuments.

America is full of statues and monuments commemorating those who fought and died in war. Nearly every small town with a VFW or National Guard Armory or a public park has some kind of military War Memorial. Sometimes it is an elaborate construction with architecture and plaques and statuary and other times it is simply a piece of obsolete artillery or a military vehicle or an airplane. Frequently, these memorials include the depiction of a soldier, but not necessarily.

Have students look at Cyrus Dallin's *Captured but not Conquered* and describe it not only in terms of what it looks like but also in terms of what it means.

Find illustrations of National War Memorials such as the Iwo Jima Monument in Arlington National Cemetery, the Vietnam Memorial Wall, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, the High Water Mark on the Gettysburg Battlefield, and Cyrus Dallin's *Paul Revere*, in Boston, MA.

Obviously, there are other monuments that can be used, including the local and less well-known. Have students write a simple description of four of the monuments, and explain what the social and cultural significance of each of the works.

Some possible issues to have students address are the following: What was the cultural context of the time? What was the public's mood about the war? Who commissioned the memorial? When (in proximity to the war) was the monument erected? Was it popularly received? Who was the artist, and why was he or she chosen? What was the point of the memorial? What was it saying to the people of the day? What does it say to you?

Don't forget to have students describe what the monument looks like. A photocopy of each monument would be appropriate.